



Treasurer
State of California
Philip Angelides



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**TREASURER ANGELIDES, BET TZEDEK LEGAL SERVICES CALL ON STATE'S
FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS TO WAIVE WIRE-TRANSFER FEES CHARGED TO
HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS & FAMILIES FOR REPARATIONS PAYMENTS**

*Treasurer Says Fees Are 'Unnecessary and Unjust Burden' For Thousands Who Suffered;
Bet Tzedek Says Many Holocaust Survivors Live Their Senior Years In Poverty*

LOS ANGELES, CA – Treasurer Phil Angelides joined today with Bet Tzedek Legal Services to call on more than 170 of the State's largest financial institutions – including banks, credit unions, savings and loans and broker/dealers – to waive the wire-transfer fees that they charge Holocaust survivors and their families on payments for Holocaust-related reparations or restitution.

The Treasurer announced that he was sending a letter to the chief executive officers of each of the financial institutions, asking them to sign a commitment pledge to voluntarily waive any wire transfer or processing fees associated with Holocaust reparations or restitution. Angelides said the State Treasurer's Office then will actively follow up with each of the institutions, and the Office will establish a page on its Web site (www.treasurer.ca.gov) that will list those financial institutions that have agreed to waive the fees. The Treasurer made his announcement at a press conference here at the headquarters of Bet Tzedek (which means "House of Justice" in Hebrew), a non-profit, nonsectarian law firm that serves the poor, elderly and disabled without regard to race or religion.

Angelides' letter is going to more than 170 major financial institutions across the State, including more than 140 that do business with the State Treasurer's Office and all financial institutions that are known to process reparations payments. Those 140-some institutions had about \$6.5 billion in state deposits as of June 30, and engaged in more than \$70 billion in securities transactions with the Treasurer's Office in the past fiscal year.

"More than 60 years have passed since the atrocities of the Holocaust took place," Angelides said. "These Holocaust survivors and their families have suffered enough, and the reparations and

restitution they receive are a mere token of what is truly owed to them. To charge handling fees is an unnecessary and unjust burden for all, and particularly hurtful for those who can barely make ends meet.”

But, Angelides added, “If financial institutions agree to waive the fees, that commitment would contribute to a morally just effort on behalf of the financial community we all comprise.”

The Treasurer said he was building on the efforts of Assemblywoman Fran Pavley, D-Woodland Hills, who began a successful campaign last year to recruit banks to voluntarily waive their wire transfer fees on reparation and restitution payments. “Waiving these fees permanently is a humane gesture that protects the rights of the most indigent and vulnerable survivors,” Pavley said.

California is home to 15,000 to 20,000 Holocaust survivors, the second largest such population in the United States. An estimated 6,000 to 8,000 Californians receive reparation or restitution payments. For example, about 1,040 now receive monthly pension benefits that average \$350 from the German government. About 40 percent of those who receive reparation or restitution payments live in poverty, according to Bet Tzedek officials. The transfer or wire fee, which can range from \$10 to \$40, can be a true burden on recipients, the vast majority of whom are elderly. Today, the average age of a Holocaust survivor exceeds 75, and the survivors are dying at a rate of approximately 10 percent a year.

“We are grateful that the Treasurer's Office is joining Bet Tzedek in the campaign to ensure that our clients receive the full amount of their reparations payments,” said Mitchell Kamin, executive director of Bet Tzedek. Kamin said that Bet Tzedek has represented free of charge close to 2,000 elderly, indigent survivors of the Holocaust “who need the meager reparations they receive for the basic necessities of life.” Having to pay wire transfer fees, which can amount to more than ten percent of the total payment, “is a true hardship for our clients,” Kamin said. “We thank the Treasurer's Office for recognizing the precarious plight of this community.”

Due to the efforts of Assemblywoman Pavley and Bet Tzedek, a handful of financial institutions that operate in California already have indicated they are willing to voluntarily waive such transfer fees. They include Bank of America, Bank of California, Citibank, City National Bank, Washington Mutual, Wells Fargo and World Savings. Angelides said that as soon as these financial institutions sign and return their pledge letters, his Office would add their names to the Web site list of participating institutions.

Angelides has long been active in seeking reparations and justice for Holocaust survivors, both in his role as state Treasurer and as a member of the boards of the California Public Employees' Retirement System (CalPERS) and the California State Teachers' Retirement System (CalSTRS) – the nation's largest and third largest public pension funds.

In 1999, for example, the Treasurer urged companies identified as being involved in the Holocaust-era seizing of assets and use of slave labor to “negotiate with speed and good faith” to join what would become a \$4.5 billion global settlement. And, at the Treasurer's urging, CalPERS and CalSTRS joined in that effort. In addition, the Treasurer served on the Executive Monitoring

Committee, a national leadership group of nine state financial officers that met periodically to review the status of Holocaust restitution issues worldwide, and that pushed for a global settlement that ensured fair reparations and justice from European nations and corporations for Holocaust survivors.

At the time, the Treasurer argued that a genuine financial restitution was not possible, “given the enormity of the destruction and loss.” However, he told corporations that a “morally acceptable settlement must be reached quickly,” particularly given the advanced age of the survivors.



FACT SHEET ON REPARATIONS RECEIVED BY HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS IN THE U.S.

- An estimated 120,000 elderly Holocaust survivors live in the U.S. today. It is estimated that 40% of survivors live in poverty.
- Approximately 15,000 to 20,000 Holocaust survivors reside in California and the vast majority are over age 65.
- Survivors may receive reparations from one or more of 15 programs that distribute reparations funds by wire transfer from various countries.
- The average amount of monthly reparations payments is \$350.
- Bank fees on wire transfers vary, ranging from \$10 to \$40 per transaction.
- A wire transfer fee of \$30 represents approximately 8.5% of an average payment.
- A number of banks in New York and Illinois already have adopted a policy of waiving all wire-transfer fees. In England, the British Bankers' Association implemented this policy on an industry wide basis two years ago. Holocaust survivors residing in the U.K. may receive reimbursement of \$3 per wire transfer dating back to 1951. (Source: www.bba.org.uk).
- Banks operating in California that so far have agreed to waive wire transfer fees include:
 - Bank of America
 - Bank of California
 - Citibank
 - City National Bank
 - Washington Mutual
 - Wells Fargo
 - World Savings



PHILIP ANGELIDES

*Treasurer
State of California*

SAMPLE LETTER

*[CEO]
[Financial Institution]
[Address]*

Dear *(name)*:

We are writing to urge you to voluntarily waive any wire transfer or processing fees associated with Holocaust reparations or restitution payments. This is a troubling problem affecting Holocaust survivors that has been brought to our attention by several Jewish community groups. Your financial institution is in a strong position to help address this problem. As you may be aware, recipients of Holocaust reparations or restitution payments are often charged international wire transfer fees when these funds are transferred to their bank accounts. It is our understanding that a few financial institutions operating in California, including Bank of America, Wells Fargo Bank, City National Bank, Washington Mutual, Citibank, World Savings, and Bank of California have already pledged to waive all fees.

It is estimated that 15,000 to 20,000 Holocaust survivors reside in California, of which approximately 40% live in poverty. Over 6,000 of these survivors receive some form of reparations or restitution payment. For example, about 1,040 now receive monthly pension benefits, averaging \$350, from the German Government. The transfer fee, which can range from \$10 - \$40, is a significant burden on recipients, the vast majority of whom are elderly and rely upon these payments for their subsistence.

More than 60 years have passed since the atrocities of the Holocaust took place. While genuine financial restitution is not possible, I hope you will join other financial institutions in waiving a fee that is modest in financial terms but nonetheless meaningful to the intended recipients. Above all, your commitment would contribute to a morally just effort on behalf of the financial community we all comprise.

If you agree to adopt this policy, please have a senior officer with requisite authority to sign on behalf of your institution sign on the below concurrence line and return your pledge to me no later than October 1, 2003. I am hopeful that you will join the Treasurer's Office in this important endeavor. If you have any questions, please contact *Jennifer Watson* at (916) 653-3147.

Sincerely,

Phil Angelides
State Treasurer

Concurrence Certified by:

Print Name and Title

Signature

Date

NOTE: A Senior Officer with requisite authority to sign on behalf of the institution must sign the concurrence.

Financial Institution

1	A.G. Edwards & Sons, Inc.
2	America California Bank
3	American River Bank
4	American Savings
5	Banc One Capital Markets, Inc.
6	Bank of America
7	Bank of California
8	Bank of East Asia
9	Bank of Lodi
10	Bank of Los Altos
11	Bank of Nova Scotia
12	Bank of Petaluma
13	Bank of Sacramento
14	Bank of Santa Clara
15	Bank of the Sierra
16	Bank of the West
17	Bay Area Bank
18	Bay Bank of Commerce
19	Bear, Stearns & Co. Inc.
20	Borel Bank & Trust
21	Broadway Federal Bank
22	Business Bank of California
23	California Bank & Trust
24	California Center Bank
25	California Coast FCU
26	California Credit Union
27	California National Bank
28	Capital Bank of North Country
29	Cathay Bank
30	Cedars Bank
31	Central California Bank
32	CHB America Bank
33	China Trust Bank USA
34	CIBC World Markets Corporation
35	Citibank West FSB
36	Citigroup
37	Citigroup Global Markets Inc.
38	Citizens Business Bank
39	City National Bank
40	Civic Arts Plaza FCU
41	Coast Commercial Bank
42	Comerica Bank
43	Commercial Capital Bank, FSB

44	Community Bank
45	Cooperative Center FCU
46	County Bank
47	Credit Suisse First Boston Corporation
48	Cupertino National Bank & Trust
49	D.A. Davidson & Company
50	Downey Savings & Loan
51	East West Bank
52	Eastern International Bank
53	El Dorado Savings Bank
54	ElDorado Bank
55	Evertrust Bank
56	Fahnestock & Co. Inc.
57	Farmers & Merchants Bank
58	Fidelity Federal Bank
59	First Bank of Beverly Hills, FSB
60	First Bank of San Luis Obispo
61	First Business Bank
62	First California Bank
63	First Coastal Bank, N.A.
64	First Commercial Bank
65	First Federal Bank of California
66	First Future CU
67	First Republic Bank
68	First Republic Bank - Los Angeles
69	First State Bank of California
70	First United Bank
71	Five Star Bank
72	Fullerton Community Bank
73	Gilmore Bank
74	Golden 1 Credit Union
75	Golden Gate Bank
76	Goldman Sachs & Co.
77	Guaranty Bank
78	Hacienda Bank
79	Hancock Savings & Loan
80	Hanmi Bank
81	Hawthorne Savings Bank
82	Hemet Federal Savings
83	Heritage Bank of Commerce
84	Highland Federal Bank
85	HSBC Securities, Inc.
86	J.P. Morgan Chase & Company
87	Jackson Federal Bank

88	Keefe, Bruyette & Woods, Inc.
89	Kinecta FCU
90	La Jolla Bank
91	Lake Community Bank
92	Lehman Brothers Holdings, Inc.
93	Malaga Bank, SSB
94	Manufacturers Bank
95	Mechanics Bank
96	Mellon 1st Business Bank
97	Mellon Financial Markets, LLC
98	Merchants National Bank of Sacramento
99	Meriwest CU
100	Merrill Lynch & Co.
101	Metropolitan Bank
102	Mid-Peninsula Bank
103	Mid-State Bank
104	Mission Community Bank
105	Montecito Bank & Trust
106	Monterey Federal Credit Union
107	Morgan Keegan & Co., Inc.
108	Morgan Stanley
109	Mt. Diablo Bank
110	Nara Bank
111	National Bank of California
112	National Bank of the Redwoods
113	Neighborhood National Bank
114	North Coast Bank
115	North Island FCU
116	North State National Bank
117	North Valley Bank
118	Oak Valley Community Bank
119	Oceanic Bank
120	Omni Bank
121	OneUnited Bank
122	Operating Engineers Loc. 3 CU
123	Oppenheimer & Co.
124	Pacific Capital Bancorp
125	Pacific State Bank
126	Pacific Union Bank
127	Pacific Western National Bank
128	Pan American Bank
129	Peninsula Bank of Commerce
130	Peoples Bank of California
131	PFF Bank & Trust

132	Plumas Bank
133	Polam FCU
134	Preferred Bank
135	Provident Central CU
136	Provident Savings Bank
137	Quaker City Bank
138	Raymond James & Associates, Inc.
139	River City Bank
140	Sae Han Bank
141	SAFE CU
142	San Diego National Bank
143	San Jose National Bank
144	San Luis Trust Bank
145	Santa Clara FCU
146	Service 1st Bank
147	Silvergate Bank
148	South Bay Bank
149	State Bank of India
150	Stone & Youngberg
151	Sunwest Bank
152	Trans Pacific National Bank
153	Travis CU
154	Tri Counties Bank
155	Trust Bank
156	TRW Systems FCU
157	UBS Investment Bank
158	Union Bank of California
159	Union Safe Deposit Bank
160	United Commercial Bank
161	United Savings Bank - San Francisco
162	United Security Bank
163	US Bancorp
164	Valley Community Bank
165	Valley First Credit Union
166	Valley Independent Bank
167	Verdugo Banking Company
168	Wachovia Corporation
169	Washington Mutual Bank
170	Wells Fargo & Company
171	Wescom CU
172	WestAmerica Bancorp
173	Westcoast Savings Bank
174	Western Federal Credit Union
175	Western Sierra National Bank

176	Wilshire State Bank
177	World Savings Bank, FSB
178	Xerox FCU
179	Zions First National Bank